

## Environmentalists say they'll sue over Staples Ranch plans

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PLEASANTON — The Stoneridge Drive extension faces another potential speed bump.

Two environmental groups and a group of residents who oppose the extension of the street to Livermore — planned as part of the Staples Ranch development — have sent an intent-to-sue notice to Pleasanton officials, saying the city did not adequately address environmental issues before approving both projects.

The City Council approved the Stoneridge Drive extension Feb. 24.

The groups say the environmental reports do not analyze the impact the road extension could have on residential neighborhoods or on the environment and the flora and fauna in the construction areas. The lack of analysis on those impacts is a direct violation of the state's environmental laws, the groups say.

A lawyer for the Center for Biological Diversity, the Alameda Creek Alliance and Safe Streets Pleasanton sent the letter Thursday, saying they would like to sit down with city officials to come up with solutions to their concerns before proceeding with a formal lawsuit.

But the parties would have to meet before Friday to avoid a lawsuit. The Pleasanton City Council also has the option to vote to extend the lawsuit deadline another 30 days so the groups have more time to meet. However, City Attorney Michael Roush said he is not sure if such an extension is possible because the council would have to meet in closed session to vote on that decision.

Roush did say that even if the groups did file suit, the parties would not be precluded from discussing the options after it is filed.

The environmental groups are also concerned the Staples Ranch review did not address impacts the projects would have on steelhead trout, the California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, pond turtle and San Joaquin spearscale, a rare plant that is found on the Staples Ranch site.

Staples Ranch, as proposed, includes a 37-acre auto mall; a 45-acre senior continuing care community with a maximum of 800 units and a separate assisted living facility; 11 acres of retail; a 17-acre community park with a 7-acre ice-skating facility; and a 5-acre neighborhood park with a water detention basin. The project is planned on 124 acres adjacent to the Stoneridge Drive neighborhood Interstate 580/El Charro Road interchange.

Environmental groups say the city has no way to replace the loss of the spearscale.

"They claimed they have mitigated for the plants and they haven't," said Jeff Miller of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Members of the groups did raise their concerns in writing and at public hearings, but were ignored, Miller said.

Roush said the City Council felt the environmental reports were adequate for the projects.

"There is a different in opinion and that is sometimes why lawsuits get filed," Roush said.

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